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SUBJECT: Serbia: President and Foreign Minister Defend Dayton
Accords

Refs: (A) Sarajevo 2266 and previous, (B) State 149183

Summary

¶1. Both President Tadic and Prime Minister Jeremic, in separate meetings on October 30 reaffirmed Serbia's support for the Dayton Accords as one of the "guarantors," and criticized High Representative to Bosnia and Herzegovina Miroslav Lajcak for taking measures in Bosnia contrary to the accords. They defended Bosnian Serb Prime Minister Milorad Dodik's actions saying he represented the "will of the people of Republika Srpska." Jeremic cautioned representatives of the Quint (UK, U.S, Italy, France and Germany) that the situation in the region was explosive. Tadic's Foreign Policy Advisor Markovic told Charge that "every single action (in the former Yugoslavia) is interconnected" and that the international community had to be especially cautious in the upcoming months. Markovic added that even though 99% of the population of Republika Srpska saw their destiny within Serbia, the Serbian Government's staunch policy was to defend the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. End Summary.

Quint Demarche

¶2. With the UK Ambassador Wordsworth in the lead, representatives of the Quint demarched Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic on Serbia's inaccurate and inflammatory statements regarding recent actions of Bosnia's High Representative Miroslav Lajcak. Furthermore Wordsworth urged Jeremic to use Serbia's influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina to defuse tensions and help the country progress in line with Dayton.

¶3. Noting he would study the Quint demarche in detail, Jeremic said Serbia also was strongly concerned about recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region as a whole. He said he wanted to work together with the Quint and the international community to defuse tensions, in particular in advance of the "delicate" weeks and months ahead. Jeremic emphasized that Serbia remained committed to EU and European-Atlantic integration, but that Serbia's and the Quint's ideas of pace were perhaps different.

¶4. The Republika Srpska (RS), he said, was defined by the Dayton Accords and RS institutions were democratic institutions representing the will of the people who lived there. Jeremic warned the Quint that during an October 29 vote in the RS Assembly, deputies had overwhelmingly supported Dodik, 71-6.

¶5. Nevertheless, Jeremic said, the policy of the Serbian Government was to support unity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia, as a guarantor of Dayton was worried about developments there, including Lajcak's recent actions. "We don't want to get into the core of Bosnian politics," he said, but Lajcak's actions were impossible to ignore. "The last thing we want to do is inflame tensions," Jeremic said.

¶16. Jeremic further warned the Quint that all in the region were faced with a serious threat to stability in the coming weeks and that the Serbian Government would do all in its power to prevent future negative developments.

¶17. Following Wordsworth's defense of Lajcak's actions on the grounds that they were warranted in the face of complete paralysis of Bosnian institutions, Jeremic said that the basis of Dayton was for all three constituent groups to agree to any action. Jeremic said there was complete agreement among Bosnian Serbs that Lajcak's actions were directed exclusively against them. Jeremic agreed, however that Bosnian Serb withdrawal from Bosnia's institutions would be unhelpful and said the Serbian Government would encourage Dodik to "reach out" to Lajcak.

¶18. When Quint representatives were asked to participate, Charge noted that the USG was in complete agreement with the UK-drafted demarche and that Washington remained highly engaged on this issue. She added that she had no doubt Jeremic fully understood the demarche and encouraged him to balance rhetoric on Bosnian issues with the bigger picture of achieving peace and stability in the Balkans.

Tadic Gives Same Message to German Foreign Ministry Political Director

¶19. The Quint demarche coincided with the visit of German Foreign Ministry Political Director Volker Stanzel. According to Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Jovan Ratkovic, with whom Charge spoke following an Israeli Embassy event honoring Serbs who helped save Jews during WWII, Tadic gave Stanzel the identical message:

-- Serbia was committed to Bosnian unity,

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-- Lajcak's actions were ill-timed and ill-advised, and

-- Given the current climate absolutely nothing could happen in the former Yugoslavia without implications elsewhere in the region.

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